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*Museologica Brunensia*. 2016, vol. 5, iss. 2, pp. 27-36

ISSN 1805-4722 (print); ISSN 2464-5362 (online)

Stable URL (DOI): <https://doi.org/10.5817/MuB2016-2-3>

Stable URL (handle): <https://hdl.handle.net/11222.digilib/136261>

Access Date: 27. 11. 2024

Version: 20220831

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## STUDIE/ARTICLES

## WHAT IS ZBYNĚK Z. STRÁNSKÝ'S "INFLUENCE" ON MUSEOLOGY?

DOI: 10.5817/MuB2016-2-3

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## ABSTRACT/ABSTRAKT:

This article seeks to examine the question of the short- and medium-term influence of Stránský on his museological colleagues and on the following two generations, both in Brno and on the International Committee for Museology (ICOFOM), but also on a more general level. After giving some elements of Stránský's conceptions of museology, this paper attempts to analyze his influence on posterity, especially on an international level. The article also raises the question of the notion of "influence", as the term might be analyzed from different perspectives.

### Jakým způsobem Zbyněk Z. Stránský „ovlivnil“ muzeologii?

Tento článek si klade za cíl prozkoumat, jaký vliv měl Stránský z krátkodobého a střednědobého hlediska na své současníky v oboru muzeologie a na příští dvě generace muzeologů v Brně a na půdě Mezinárodního výboru pro muzea (ICOFOM), ale také na obecnější úrovni. Text se zabývá některými prvky Stránského koncepce muzeologie a pokouší se analyzovat jeho vliv na příští generace, zejména v mezinárodním kontextu. Článek také pojednává o rozdílných názorech na samotný pojem „vliv“, jenž může být vnímán z různých úhlů pohledu.

## KEYWORDS/KLÍČOVÁ SLOVA:

*museology – Stránský – ICOFOM – museological system – metamuseology*

*muzeologie – Stránský – ICOFOM – systém muzeologie – metamuzeologie*

The etymology of the word "influence" refers to the medieval Latin: *influentia* or the "action assigned to the stars on human destiny."<sup>1</sup> If we stick to that principle, the influence of Z. Z. Stránský is particularly limited. In the thirteenth century, however, the term takes on a more human meaning, "slow and continuous action exercised by a person or a thing on another person or thing."<sup>2</sup> It is for this reason that we can question the influence of Stránský on museology or, more fairly, on his colleagues.<sup>3</sup>

Most of Stránský's career advanced in a very different context from today. He had known war and it was mainly during the Cold War that he developed his career. With the fall of the Berlin Wall, in his early sixties, he still had many years of scientific production before him, having launched the International Summer School of Museology (ISSOM) in 1987. Internationally, he is primarily considered as an "Eastern" thinker, a representative of a certain vision of the museum which proved to be very influential during the Cold War period, but which mostly disappeared after the 1990s. This article seeks to examine the question of the short- and

medium-term influence of Stránský on his colleagues and on the following two generations. I must in this context position myself, having followed Stránský's courses in Brno during an ISSOM session and having interacted with him as a (very young) ICOFOM colleague during the last years of his presence within the committee, at a time (the second half of the 1990s) when he was preparing to gradually withdraw from the international sphere. I am aware of the partly subjective perspective that this contribution could propose, which would necessarily differ from that of someone who had not met him.

### A major influence in the ICOFOM

Between 1980 and 1997, Stránský published over thirty articles and comments in *Museological Working Papers* and the *ICOFOM Study Series* published by ICOFOM, making him one of the most regular and prolific authors of the committee. His close involvement within the committee (founded and firstly chaired by Jan Jelínek) from its inception, as well as the quality of his contributions, render him a *de facto* key figure of the founding generation of ICOFOM. As it has already been noted,<sup>4</sup> for many Western scientists, the world of museology beyond the Iron Curtain was relatively unknown, and it was a considerable surprise for Western museologists to enter into a direct relationship with such

1 *Trésor de la langue française informatisé* [online]. [cit. 2016-08-30]. Available from www: <http://atilf.atilf.fr>.

2 Ibid.

3 I would like to thank Anna Leshchenko and my two reviewers for their corrections and comments on an earlier version of this paper.

4 MAIRESSE, François and André DESVALLÉES. *Muséologie*. In MAIRESSE, François and André DESVALLÉES (eds.). *Dictionnaire encyclopédique de muséologie*. Paris: Armand Colin, 2011, pp. 343–384.

particular “Eastern”<sup>5</sup> views, especially the more theoretical aspects.

It would be incorrect to see Stránský as the only representative of this specific stream. In the two issues of *Museological Working Papers* (MuWoP, 1/1980), of the twenty-six authors, nine may be labeled as coming from the Eastern Bloc (Anna Gregorová, Ilse Jahn, Jiří Neustupný, Jurij Pisculin, Avraam Razgon, Klaus Schreiner, Tibor Sekelj, Zbyněk Stránský and Jerzy Świecimski) but three were Czechoslovak (Neustupný from Prague, Stránský from Brno and Gregorová from Bratislava). Schreiner, a native of the German Democratic Republic (GDR) and Avraam Razgon, from the Soviet Union, could also be considered as major figures of museology in the Eastern countries, and their thoughts sometimes differ widely from those of Stránský. It is worth noticing the place occupied by Czechoslovakia on the museum map during this period. If we add to the previously quoted authors the major role played by Jan Jelínek (Director of the Moravian Museum, founder of the Anthropos museum in Brno, President of ICOM from 1971 to 1977, then President of ICOFOM from 1977 to 1981) and the major role played by Vnoš Sofka (active in Brno until 1968, then resident in Stockholm, and President of ICOFOM from 1981 to 1989),<sup>6</sup> it would be appropriate to recognize the unique role played at that time by that country in world museology.

Neustupný was probably the first to develop, at an international level, specific views on museums, in the 1950s, and his book *Museum and research*, published in 1968,<sup>8</sup> inspired the father of French museology and permanent advisor of ICOM, Georges Henri Riviére. Josef Beneš, in Prague, was also a prominent figure in the teaching of museology at that time. But above all, we could not understand the importance of Brno on the museum map without considering the role of Jelínek in its international recognition.

The fact remains that Stránský’s efforts significantly intensified the relations between Brno and museology, especially because of the longevity of his interventions. Neustupný, who was among the founding fathers of ICOFOM, was born in 1905 and belonged to the previous generation, while Jelínek (born in 1926) left ICOFOM very early. There would not be many interventions by Avram Razgon (maybe the most outstanding museologist in the USSR at that time, who died in 1989) in ICOFOM; while Klaus Schreiner (from the GDR) died in 1990. However, Stránský’s position, besides his writing and academic activities in Brno, was hardly weakened during the years following the Velvet Revolution, maybe due to the opening of the Brno International Summer School of Museology (ISSOM) in 1987, which was supported by UNESCO and would host, for the next ten years,<sup>9</sup> young pro-

fessionals of museums from around the world.

The position of Stránský within ICOFOM, in this perspective, is highly significant until the early 2000s. Although he never ran for president, his place within the committee was central, not only of course due to the important number of his articles and contributions, but especially for their considerable influence on other colleagues. This includes the very definition of museology, a major topic discussed by the Committee<sup>10</sup> to which Stránský’s views contributed decisively (the role of Anna Gregorová should also be pointed out, with her definition of museology being given in the first MuWoP). Until then, the most common definition of museology was a “museum science”, originally conceived by Riviére and widely shared within the ICOM. Even the American George Ellis Burcaw, in his *Introduction of Museum Work*, quotes the definition while attributing it to the ICOM:

*“Museology is museum science. It has to do with the study of the history and background of museums, their role in the society, specific systems of research, conservation, education and organization, relationship with the physical environment, and the classification of different kinds of museums. In brief, museology is the branch of knowledge concerned with the study of the purposes and organization of museums. Museography is the body of techniques related to museology. It covers methods and practices in the operation of museums, in all their various aspects.”*<sup>11</sup>

The idea that museology would not refer to the museum but to “a hu-

5 As Nada Guzin remarked, the idea of an “Eastern museology” should be reconsidered, as many differences existed between communist countries at that moment. GUZIN LUKIC, Nada. *La muséologie de l’Est: la construction d’une discipline scientifique et la circulation transnationale des idées en muséologie. ICOFOM Study Series*, 2015, vol. 43a, pp. 111–125.

6 See MENSCH, Peter van. Some impressions concerning Vnoš Sofka (1929–2016): Lawyer, Bricklayer, Administrator, and Museologist. *Museologica Brunensia*, 2016, vol. 5, no. 1, pp. 74–76.

7 It is known that museum courses were already being run in Brno in the 1920s, see JAGOŠOVÁ, Lucie and Lenka MRÁZOVÁ. Tradition of museum pedagogy in the Czech Republic and the role of Brno museology on its development. *Museologica Brunensia*, 2015, vol. 7, no. 4/2, pp. 56–64.

8 NEUSTUPNÝ, Jiří. *Museum and Research*. Prague: National Museum, 1968; see RIVIÉRE, Georges Henri. *La muséologie selon Georges Henri Riviére*. Paris: Dunod, 1989, p. 180 sq.

9 STRÁNSKÝ, Z. Z. Ten years of the International Summer School of Museology. In STRÁNSKÝ, Z. Z. (ed.). *Museology for Tomorrow’s World: proceedings of the international symposium held at Masaryk University, Brno, Oct 9–11, 1996*. Munich: Verlag Müller-Straten, 1997, pp. 143–151.

10 See MAIRESSE, François and André DESVALLÉES. *Muséologie*. In MAIRESSE, François and André DESVALLÉES (eds.). *Dictionnaire encyclopédique de muséologie*. Paris: Armand Colin, 2011, pp. 343–384.

11 BURCAW, George Ellis. *Introduction to Museum Work*. Nashville: American Association for State and Local History, 1975, pp. 12–13.

man specific relationship to reality”<sup>12</sup> inspired most of the members of the committee. “*This is a kind of Copernican revolution in which the object of museology is reduced to this specific relationship, and in which the museum would be a particular realization,*”<sup>13</sup> writes Bernard Deloche. Peter van Mensch, with his thesis written in 1992, has probably offered the most comprehensive update on the place of Stránský in museology: the number of quotations given, as well as the position of Stránský concerning most key museological concepts, demonstrates the continued importance of the Brno master within the museological sphere.<sup>14</sup> It is not the purpose of this article to present a detailed study of the museological terms conceived by Stránský. However, it seems necessary to present some key elements if we want to try to evaluate his influence.

### Elements of Zbyněk Stránský’s museological conceptions

The position of Zbyněk Stránský on museology is well known: from a scientific point of view, museology (the term first appeared in the nineteenth century) is not and cannot be considered as a science within the current university system. “*The overall standard that museum theory has reached is not very satisfactory from the metatheoretical viewpoint, i.e. it is not quite up to the present criteria put on scientific theory.*”<sup>15</sup> For him, the core problems faced by museums (e.g. the museum crisis of 1971<sup>16</sup>) could not be solved in the

realm of practice, as they were too complex, but only through museum theory. The Brno scholar would devote most of his career to the identification and promotion of the necessary conditions to establish museology as a science. The necessary conditions for museology to become scientific in nature were described by Stránský as: it must have (1) a specific object of knowledge, (2) a method of its own, (3) a specific scientific language and (4) a theoretical system.<sup>17</sup> This proposition evolved little over the years, even with the major changes that completely modified the political landscape: Stránský maintained almost the same structure (object, methods, language and system) in *Museology, introduction to the study*, published in 1995.<sup>18</sup> The existence of museology as a science therefore seemed possible, provided that we could, on the one hand, meet a number of formal requirements related to its object and its method, and on the other hand, demonstrate them to be strictly useful. Stránský was certainly not the only one to develop these principles, and in fact, one of the major ICOFOM objectives was to establish museology as a discipline within the university framework. For instance, we may stress, in particular, the extremely consistent research conducted by Klaus Schreiner, Peter van Mensch and Ivo Maroević, which would lead to the drafting of comprehensive museological treaties.<sup>19</sup>

The (1) object of knowledge of museology is probably Stránský’s most significant contribution. As Bernard Deloche evokes above, it may indeed be considered as a Copernican reversal: it was not museology that was developed from the museum, but the opposite. Stránský saw the object of museological knowledge as the study of a specific relationship between man and reality, which seems to be a much more stable object of research than the museum itself, as this institution is fairly recent in the history of mankind (no more than three centuries for the modern museum). This means, moreover, that older forms existed before the museum, such as cabinets of curiosities, and that further forms would come into existence in the future: for example, communication science exists and not mobile phone science (or a so-called mobilephonology). Of course, history, sociology or other disciplines can contribute to the knowledge of this specific relationship, but the specificity of the topic should be recognized, as well as early attempts to theorize it, and several can be found in ancient literature dating back to Quiccheberg (the *Inscriptiones vel tituli theatri*, 1565).

The question of language and vocabulary (3) for a long time attracted Stránský’s attention. He collaborated on the *Dictionarium museologicum* project, by coordinating the Czech side,<sup>20</sup> but he was above all acknowledged for his decisive development of concepts such as musealization, musealia or museality.<sup>21</sup> The invention of new concepts (that may define the role of the

12 GREGOROVÁ, Anna. La muséologie, science ou seulement travail pratique du musée? *MuWoP/DoTraM*, 1980, no. 1, pp. 19–21.

13 DELOCHE, Bernard. Pour une muséologie contractuelle. *ICOFOM Study Series*, 2015, vol. 43a, p. 84.

14 MENSCH, Peter van. *Towards a Methodology of Museology*. Zagreb: University of Zagreb, Faculty of Philosophy, 1992. Doctor’s Thesis.

15 STRÁNSKÝ, Z. Z. La muséologie – science ou seulement travail pratique du musée? *MuWoP/DoTraM*, 1980, no. 1, p. 44.

16 See for instance O’DOHERTY, Brian (ed.). *Museums in Crisis*. New York: Braziller, 1972.

17 STRÁNSKÝ, Z. Z. Museology as a science (a thesis). *Museologia*, 1980, vol. XI, no. 15, pp. 33–40.

18 STRÁNSKÝ, Z. Z. *Muséologie Introduction aux études: destinée aux étudiants de l’Ecole Internationale d’Été de Muséologie – EIEM*. Brno: Université Masaryk, 1995.

19 See MENSCH, Peter van. *Towards a Methodology of Museology*. Zagreb: University of Zagreb, Faculty of Philosophy, 1992. Doctor’s Thesis and SCHREINER, Klaus. *Einführung in die Museologie – ein Beitrag zu den theoretischen Grundlagen der Museumsarbeit*, 2 vol. Neubrandenburg: [s. n.], 1982; MAROEVIĆ, Ivo. *Introduction to Museology – the European Approach*. Munich: Verlag Christian Müller-Straten, 1998.

20 ÉRI, István and Végh BÉLA. *Dictionarium museologicum/Dictionnaire de muséologie*. Budapest: Hungarian Esperanto Association, 1986.

21 For more about these two terms, see the *Dictionnaire encyclopédique de muséologie*, MAIRESSE, François and André DESVALLÉES. *Muséologie*. In MAIRESSE, François and André DESVALLÉES (eds.). *Dictionnaire encyclopédique de muséologie*. Paris: Armand Colin, 2011, pp. 343–384 and MENSCH, Peter van. *Towards a Methodology of Museology*. Zagreb: University of Zagreb, Faculty of Philosophy, 1992. Doctor’s Thesis.



philosopher, as Deleuze proposes<sup>22</sup>) proves not to be a pleasant pastime, but a necessity, in order to work on a more accurate level. This can be revealed in an article Stránský devoted to the concept of heritage:<sup>23</sup> the specific actions related to the museum registration process, i.e. the operations of transmission from one generation to another, require the use of a specific term to differentiate them from commonly used, vague terms. For example, “heritage” is taken from juridical vocabulary and used for family transmissions of material goods, biological characteristics and values. We can accept or refuse a heritage, but our role is not very active. In this context, the term “heritage” does not refer to the real active process initiated by somebody (or society) to integrate the object received into a specific relationship with reality.

The system of museology (4) has also been deepened by Stránský, who sought throughout his career to improve its logic, including the evolution of museum practices in order to be in accordance with the western market-driven economy (Stránský spoke about management and marketing). From the outset, however, this type of museological system was already in place, partially outlined by Neustupný, who distinguished general museology from special museology.<sup>24</sup> The “system of museology” continued by Stránský, was already well established in the 1970s,<sup>25</sup> but it was refined over the years until the latest version of *Museology: Introduction to studies* (1995) which separates

theoretical museology and applied museology; in this work, theoretical museology is seen as comprising the theories of selection, thesaurisation and presentation. Applied museology includes management, marketing, architecture, conservation, information, expography, public relations and promotion.

On the contrary, the question of method (2) was not really addressed by Stránský (however it appears in the bulk of van Mensch’s PhD dissertation, *Towards a Methodology of Museology*, although the Dutch museologist only tried to build the method theoretically). If the specificity of museology’s research object can be considered as established, this discipline (or theoretical field, if not a science) is thus based on methods used by other scientific disciplines such as history or art history (history of the museum and collections), sociology or psychology (public studies and visitor studies) or physics and chemistry (the analysis of objects). As such, collection study, appears to be left totally to reference sciences (anthropology, archeology, and art history, based on collections<sup>26</sup>). The purpose of Stránský’s publications, like most ICOFOM members’ contributions, was driven by a philosophical (in its broad sense) approach, or an epistemological view of museology. Most of Stránský’s best articles could be considered as meta-museology, or a certain discourse on museology, much more than the results of a museological approach.<sup>27</sup> Obviously the development of a specific method may allow for some original results that could be discussed and adopted or abandoned. At the risk of oversimplification, we could say that if major progress had been

made by Stránský and the ICOFOM in general at that time, they did not directly lead to the introduction of methods applicable to the study of museums and collections. On the contrary, during Stránský’s early career (circa 1960s), several new approaches toward visitors were already being considered<sup>28</sup> which produced original and practical results and the constitution of a new field of research (visitor studies). The same could be said for conservation studies and, during the 1980s, the history of museums and collections.

### Stránský in posterity

Even if the master is quoted extensively in Brno, the Czech Republic, or within the ICOFOM, his reputation is far from being global, and his vision of the museum does not dominate today’s world of museums. As an indication, the number of references relating to him on Google scholar or Google books is much smaller than other eminent personalities like Georges Henri Rivièrè, Stephen Weil or Susan Pearce.<sup>29</sup> If we find some (rare) Stránský references in general French textbooks,<sup>30</sup> we find no trace of him in the most common

22 DELEUZE, Gilles and Felix GUATTARI. *Qu’est-ce que la philosophie?* Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit, 1991.

23 STRÁNSKÝ, Z. Z. Cultural Heritage: a Big Word, a Vague Term. *PACT*, 1997, pp. 635–638.

24 NEUSTUPNÝ, Jiří. *Museum and Research*. Prague: National Museum, 1968.

25 STRÁNSKÝ, Z. Z. *Brno: Education in Museology*. Brno: Purkyně University and Moravian Museum, 1974 and STRÁNSKÝ, Z. Z. *Museology as a science* (a thesis). *Museologia*, 1980, vol. XI, no. 15, pp. 33–40.

26 DAVALLON, Jean. Musée et muséologie. Introduction. In *Musées et recherche, Actes du colloque de Paris, 29 and 30 November and 1 December, 1993*. Dijon: OCIM, 1995, pp. 245–256.

27 Even though we know that Stránský also worked in museums and for museums, for instance collaborating on the design of the Exhibition of the Battle of Austerlitz (Slavkov), near Brno.

28 SCHIELE, Bernard. Les études de visiteurs. La formation, l’évolution et les défis actuels du champ. In DAIGNAULT, Lucie and Bernard SCHIELE. *Les musées et leurs publics, savoirs et enjeux*. Québec: Presses universitaires de Québec, 2014, pp. 7–69.

29 When entering the name and surname of the author, associated with “museum”, on Google Scholar (which gathers worldwide academic articles and citations) one obtains the following result: Stránský: 308; Rivièrè: 18 000; Weil: 21 200; and Pearce: 21 600. When searching for the name and surname of the author on Google books, one finds the following result: Stránský: 1 060; Rivièrè: 111 000; Pearce: 114 000; and Weil: 198 000. Results collected on August 20, 2016. These results must be considered as approximate, as the search engine has its own specificity, and the results are just based on digitalized literature.

30 GOB, André and Noémie DROUGUET. *La muséologie. Histoire, développements, enjeux actuels*. 4th ed. Paris: Armand Colin, 2014; POULOT, Dominique. *Musée et muséologie*. Paris: La découverte, 2005; both of which cite or briefly discuss the author.

Anglo-Saxon textbooks.<sup>31</sup> From the second *MuWoP*, one of the most prominent personalities of American museology at that time, George Ellis Burcaw, conveyed his difficulties in adopting the views expressed by most Eastern colleagues – above all those of Brno and Stránský, whom he quoted extensively – as most American museum workers were not dealing with museology: “*Eastern museology, as exemplified in Brno is founded more on philosophy than on pragmatism. In my opinion, the Western approach is likely to be more productive in the short run, but for efficiency and worth in the long run, the Eastern approach is needed.*”<sup>32</sup> Forty years later, we still seem to live in the short run evoked by Burcaw. In 1997, for the tenth anniversary of the ISSOM, Kenneth Hudson, invited by Stránský, strongly criticized anyone who pretended to develop museology as a scientific discipline:

*“It goes without saying, I should have thought, that one cannot have museologists without a subject called museology or financial advisers without a financial system, and second, that in order to defend their position, the practitioners must be able to justify the subject, at least to themselves. But it is important to realize that the people who decide, for whatever reasons, to be officially known as museologists are essentially the priests and in one or two instances the bishops and cardinals of the cult of museology.”*<sup>33</sup>

31 For example, AMBROSE, Timothy and Crispin PAINE. *Museum Basics*. 3rd ed. London: Routledge, 2012; CARBONELL, Bettina Messias. *Museum Studies. An Anthology of Contexts*. Oxford: Wiley Blackwell, 2012; MACDONALD, Sharon (ed.). *A Companion to Museum Studies*. Oxford: Wiley Blackwell, 2011; MESSAGE, Kylie and Andrea WITCOMB (vol. eds). *Museum Theory. An Expanded Field*. MACDONALD, Sharon and Helen REES LEAHY (eds.). *The International Handbooks of Museum Studies*. Oxford: Wiley Blackwell, 2015, pp. xxxv–lxiii.

32 BURCAW, George Ellis. Comments on *MuWop* no 1. *MuWop/Do Tram*, 1981, no. 2, pp. 85–86.

33 HUDSON, Kenneth. Who are the ‘museologists’ and for whose benefit do they exist? In STRÁNSKÝ, Z. Z. (ed.). *Museology for Tomorrow’s World: proceedings of the international symposium held at Masaryk University, Brno, Oct 9–11, 1996*. München: Müller-Straten, 1997, p. 105.

There can be no doubt that in Hudson’s eyes, Stránský, if not the pope, held a very high position in the “cult of museology”. If there were other equally strong reactions, most Anglo-Saxons reacted with indifference (above all because most of his writings were not published in English), showing as a result that such museological ideas were far from being internationally widespread. Even in the ICOFOM, with notable exceptions, a kind of general indifference started to spread across the new generations, who were focusing on other topics, and most contributors of the *ICOFOM Study Series* of recent years do not seem to have followed (and quoted) Stránský’s ideas at all. If the debates on the future of museology as science are indeed not really on the agenda<sup>34</sup> anymore and if the influence of “Eastern” museology has largely decreased since the fall of the Berlin Wall, it would be wrong to underestimate the influence of Stránský, at least for some researchers.

It is interesting to note the evolution of Stránský’s references within the ICOFOM itself. One might consider, in this regard, four generational members’ movements. The first generation is related to its founders (1977 to 1985), the second developed in the 1980s (1985 to 1993 until the end of the presidency of van Mensch), its members having strong relations with the master of Brno. The third generation could be considered to run from 1993 to 2007 (up to the presidency of Hildeward Vieregge), and only some of its members got to know Stránský; the fourth would run from 2007 to the present date. Of course, very few members of the first generation of the ICOFOM are still active today, such as André Desvallées and later Peter van Mensch (who arrived in the early 1980s), and continue

34 DELOCHE, Bernard. Pour une muséologie contractuelle. *ICOFOM Study Series*, 2015, vol. 43a, p. 84.

to quote Stránský as a reference regarding the foundations of museology. Ivo Maroević, who belonged to the same generation (he supervised van Mensch’s PhD in Zagreb), could also be considered as one of the propagators of Stránský’s ideas, although he himself proved to conceive numerous very original and important ideas on museology.<sup>35</sup> The same is true for many ICOFOM members who arrived in the mid-1980s and can be considered as being part of the second ICOFOM generation: Martin Schaerer (Switzerland, the ICOFOM President from 1993 to 1998), Bernard Deloche (France), Tereza Scheiner (Brazil, President from 1998 to 2001), Nelly Decarolis (Argentina, President from 2007 to 2010) and Norma Rusconi (Argentina). All of these people would largely continue to refer to (and expand on) Stránský’s ideas. It is worth mentioning the joint collaboration of Scheiner and Decarolis within the ICOFOM LAM subcommittee (bringing together museum professionals from Latin American countries) that was created in 1992. Strong supporters of Stránský’s ideas, both Scheiner and Decarolis spread his thinking through this very important Latin American network. The importance attributed by Scheiner to Stránský is worth noting. Thanks to her academic position within one of the very first universities to establish museum studies courses (University of Rio de Janeiro, in 1932), her teaching and writings clearly influenced several generations of Brazilian students, and contributed to the spreading of Stránský’s ideas across the Latin American conti-

35 MAROEVIĆ, Ivo. *Introduction to Museology – the European Approach*. Munich: Verlag Christian Müller-Straten, 1998. Besides these aforementioned members, some other Czechs should be quoted, such as Beneš or Šuleř. One should also remember Mathilde Bellaigue, who was very much dedicated to the Committee until she retired, in 1996. Of course, Suzan Nash, Vinoř Sofka’s wife, still continues to be very active in the Committee too. It is among this first generation that one should count the first presidents of the ICOFOM, Jelínek, Sofka and van Mensch. Desvallées and Maroević were also elected vice-presidents.

ment. Among the students trained by Scheiner were Bruno Brulon Soares (the current Vice President of the ICOFOM), Luciana Menezes de Carvalho and Bernardo Anaildo Baraçal (author of a master's thesis on Stránský).<sup>36</sup> The organization of a symposium in October 2015 at UNIRIO, for the 50th anniversary of Stránský first article on the subject of museology, reflects the importance given to the author by this university.

If some members directly related to the second generation of ICOFOM have been particularly receptive to the ideas of Stránský, we cannot generalize this for all of its members. For instance, exceptions include Lynn Maranda and Hildegard Vieregg (President from 2001 to 2007), who developed different interests more directly related to their fields of specialization (anthropology and museum history respectively). Thus, a double movement could be described, because in the first place there had been the dynamic approach of Vinoš Sofka, the second president (1981 to 1989) and strong leader of the committee for more than a decade, who upturned the listing, analysis and synthesis of the various strains of museum theory throughout the world (the results were published in the *ICOFOM Study Series*). This attempt proved, after some years, to deviate from its initial objective.<sup>37</sup> Moreover, several great personalities like van Mensch or Stránský gradually left the committee, no longer allowing younger generations to learn directly from

36 BARAÇAL, Anaildo Bernardo. *O objeto da museologia: a via conceitual aberta por Zbynek Zbyslav Stránský*. Dissertação de Mestrado [online]. Rio de Janeiro: Unirio/MAST, 2008 (consultation August 2016) [cit. 2016-08-30]. Available from [www: <http://livros01.livrosgratis.com.br/cp102648.pdf>](http://livros01.livrosgratis.com.br/cp102648.pdf).

37 From the late 1990s, the journal, which was distributed several weeks before the symposium, read by everyone and then discussed by its participants during the symposium, started to be published and delivered just in time for the meeting, which made it difficult for its members to familiarize themselves beforehand with the other participants' way of thinking.

contact with them. With a few exceptions (particularly among Brazilian members), the following ICOFOM generations progressively distanced themselves from Stránský's influence, most of them having never really been confronted with Europe's Berlin Wall and the idea of an "Eastern" museology.

Apart from the ICOFOM's publications, Stránský's writings were mainly distributed through two other channels. Firstly, within the Czech Republic and especially Brno, some efforts were made to continue to disseminate his papers and books, even his very last contributions, such as *Archeologie a muzeologie* (2005),<sup>38</sup> while an inventory of all his publications was undertaken by Jan Dolák, at that point the holder of the UNESCO Chair of museology and world heritage in Brno, which led to the publication of his complete bibliography.<sup>39</sup> If Stránský is sometimes cited in France, as previously mentioned, it is primarily in German-speaking countries that his thought continues to be studied and valued. Katharina Flügel and Friedrich Waidacher, who edited influential textbooks on museology, quote him extensively.<sup>40</sup> Markus Walz, who just published an important reference on museums and museology, is also among the authors of the new generation who still refer to him.<sup>41</sup>

### What does "influence" mean?

As it was earlier pointed out, from a strictly museological point of view, if we stick to the main tenet

38 STRÁNSKÝ, Z. Z. *Archeologie a muzeologie*. Brno: Masarykova univerzita, 2005.

39 DOLÁK, Jan and Jana VAVŘÍKOVÁ. *Muzeolog Z. Z. Stránský. Život a dílo*. Brno: Masarykova univerzita, 2006.

40 FLÜGEL, Katharina. *Einführung in die Museologie*. Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2005; WAIDACHER, Friedrich. *Handbuch der Allgemeinen Museologie*. 2nd ed. Wien: Böhlau Verlag, 1996.

41 WALZ, Markus (ed.). *Handbuch Museum. Geschichte – Aufgaben – Perspektiven*. Stuttgart: Metzler, 2016.

of Stránský's work – i.e. the recognition of museology as a scientific discipline – one can only note that this model still does not dominate the international scene. Museology (but also museum studies) is certainly very widespread in the academic world and the literature (including the number of academic journals) continues to grow. But in actuality, it is not the idea of a discipline but rather a field of research and practices, as developed in the Anglo-Saxon logic (e.g. Leicester in the UK) that dominates.

The term "influence", however (defined as "slow and continuous action exercised by a person or a thing on another person or thing") is much broader than what is reflected through the academic literature. Stránský's influence can also be analyzed on two other levels: 1) at the specific universities where his teachings on transmission have been a focus of study; and 2) through his research activities: his presence at symposia and national or international conferences. From 1964 onwards, Stránský met hundreds of students, mainly in Brno. Only some of them became museum curators, but most of them benefited from his particular thought and way of teaching. I cannot represent this topic regarding the Czechoslovakian or Czech university system, as I did not benefit from his teachings in this context. My (subjective) testimony focuses instead on his contribution to the ISSOM, which I attended in 1995 (I followed course A). From 1987 ISSOM's annual sessions were given to small groups of less than twenty students. The teaching course was run over a full month and was completed by study tours. The link between UNESCO and ISSOM allowed for a truly international admission process: for example, the 1995 cohort consisted of students, mostly young professionals or PhD students from Belarus, Belgium, Canada, Ivory Coast, the USA, Spain, Latvia,



Mexico, Portugal, Romania, etc. The course itself was not taught by Stránský alone, although he oversaw the most theoretical part of it. Many other Czech and foreign specialists gave lessons, such as (in 1995), Mathilde Bellaigue, Bernard Deloche, Michel van Praët and, of course, Vnoš Sofka. It would be wrong to pretend that all students passionately followed Stránský's lessons and would perfectly remember his teachings and concepts. For many international students, the approach of the master of Brno, based on *ex cathedra* education, greatly contrasted with the more interactive methods used in their basic teachings. Few students seemed familiar with the writings of Stránský, which were hardly accessible outside the circles of the ICOFOM, and some of his speeches sometimes appeared like a kind of shamanistic experience enhanced by secret formulas. Yet most of the people present were convinced that something important was happening. The fact remains that the continued presence of Stránský throughout the course and during trips, always at hand to answer questions, as well as the documents he referred to during the course (in particular the *Introduction to museology*) and the documentation he provided (e.g. *MuWoP* or van Mensch's PhD dissertation, which was barely available at the time) constituted quite a remarkable context for absorbing his specific logic, during a full intensive month, seven days a week, and 24 hours a day with the same museological colleagues.

It is impossible to define the influence that this experience had on all of the ISSOM students; for some, this episode was probably part of a relatively insignificant period of their intellectual maturation. I can, however, at least certify its importance for the development of my own thoughts. Having studied museology in Brussels and Amsterdam (where I met Peter van Mensch),

seduced by the rigorous reasoning of several ICOFOM members (including Deloche, Desvallées and van Mensch), I had already read the name of Stránský and probably some articles written by him, but I had no clear idea of his entire vision of museology. The constant presence of the master of Brno, the opportunity to ask all the questions I wanted, the provision of his museological articles and references – and of course their reading – supplemented by discussion among students (some are still friends I continue to meet) constituted a decisive moment in the structuring of my thoughts on museology, and my willingness to integrate into the ICOFOM and contribute to its work. This kind of testimony is not unique. The ISSOM also played a leading role in the creation of the Baltic Museology School (BMS), created in 2004 and still very active today. The BMS brings together the efforts of the three Baltic countries (Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia) in the development of museology.<sup>42</sup> Led by Jānis Garjāns and assisted by Anita Jirgensone, the Baltic Museology School organizes a conference each summer, over the course of one full week in one of the three Baltic countries, inviting one or two international researchers to share their knowledge. It is worth mentioning that the school management team and key leading figures of the Society of Promotion of Museology in the Baltics (including Agrita Ozola) have participated in several ISSOM sessions, and many guest speakers invited by the BMS were or have been close to the ICOFOM.

If the teaching period is one of the most important moments in terms of academic influence (even though students do not seem to realize it!), it goes without saying that this process continues through-

out the academic career through readings and references (already mentioned in this article) but above all through meetings. This happens of course during communications but principally through informal discussions. Stránský actively participated throughout his career in such meetings, organizing many events in Brno. Within the ICOFOM whose symposium traditionally privileged formal and informal discussions, he had acquired the status of a kind of “guru” in the eyes of some of his main admirers. If most of us remember his contribution to the elaboration of such concepts as musealization, museality, musealia or metamuseology, eventually, the most significant of Stránský qualities might be his insatiable desire to promote museology and favor the recognition it deserves on the scientific scene. All of his work is somehow supported by this passion which was pursued very consistently, throughout his life, even in his last writings featured in *Museologica Brunensia*.

## Conclusion

The notion of influence affects all of us. We did not grow alone but with the help of other people (or in opposition to them). This begins within the family circle and goes on into school or college years, but it also continues throughout our lives through friends, circles of colleagues, and networks to which we belong, as much as through our personal readings. The power of the influence of a scientist develops in two ways: through his writings and through direct or indirect personal contact. It goes without saying that one influences the other: we want to know and have discussions with someone whose writings interest us, and often we want to quote someone we have met and whose influence seems preponderant (or because we appreciate him).

<sup>42</sup> See the internet site of BMS: *Baltic Museology School* [online]. Society of Promotion of Museology in the Baltics, 2016 [cit. 2016-08-30]. Available from www: <<http://www.bms.edu.lv/>>.



It is difficult to know the real influence of somebody, as everything cannot be measured; this of course holds true within the academic community. The conventional “scientific” method for gauging the influence of a scientist is by measuring citations (bibliometrics or scientometrics). In a way, the number of citations of an author determines his reputation and his influence within the scientific community, despite all the difficulties and the risk of error that this exercise supposes.<sup>43</sup> Although no specific studies have been carried out concerning Stránský, the few indexes mentioned in this article (such as Google scholar) suggest that his influence would be relatively limited in a global context. However, such indexes, which will hopefully be countered by a more systematic study in the future, do not really help to clarify the influence that a scholar such as the Brno master could have in his own country or in his or her own field. Whether it is in the territory of the former Czechoslovakia (present Czech and Slovak Republics), as evidenced by the efforts made at Masaryk University, or on the platform of the ICOFOM, it goes without saying that this first impression could be contradicted from a more local point of view, especially when qualitatively based on the testimonies of students, scientists and colleagues who knew him. On the other hand, these depend on subjective appreciation, and not on specific measurements. In a way, these two modes of influence and recognition look like the two ways of conceiving heritage, through its tangible and its intangible sides. Material heritage is the territory of the classical museum (and library or archive) and can be preserved and transmitted easily with the help of some technical tools. On the contrary, intangible heritage, transmitted from

generation to generation and constantly recreated, requires the help of other people, with a process that does not differ from the traditional process of master-disciple transmission. This kind of process appears to be more fragile, even though some transmission processes (especially in spiritual traditions) can last dozens of generations. Similarly, this can be found within the academic system, and in the influence exerted by particularly important masters, who are or have been willing to preserve the knowledge they have received and developed and wish to convey to subsequent generations. Such is not the case for all museum or museological masters, and many of them, however strong their qualities might be, have little thought for the issues of transmission. On the contrary, some scientists, with relatively few written contributions during their career, have instead developed a strong relation with their students and colleagues, orally transmitting their way of being and thinking about the museum.<sup>44</sup>

In this perspective, the contribution of Stránský could also be considered beyond his own writings and the references related to him in the museum literature. Such influence has been felt, particularly within the ICOFOM, for at least two generations, preserving, but also recreating the work of Brno’s most famous museologist. It now depends on the next generations to recognize this heritage, to develop and transmit it (or not) to other generations. As far as museology is considered, museological heritage (an important but vague term, in the words of Stránský) also has its own history, its masters and its destiny.

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<sup>43</sup> CALLON, Michel, Jean-Pierre COURTIAL and Hervé PENAN. *La Scientométrie*. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1993.

<sup>44</sup> I have in mind Ignace Vandevivere, see VANDEVIVERE, Ignace. *Conversation avec François Mairesse et Bernard Van den Driessche*. Bruxelles: Tandem, 2008.

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